

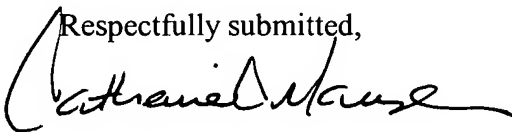
REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application and stand rejected under 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated by WO 01/34240 to Hancock et al. Reconsider of this application is requested in view of the amendments to the claims and the following remarks.

The Hancock et al patent discloses a vascular catheter with a transition member on the distal shaft portion bridging the first stiffness and the second stiffness. Hancock does not disclose the specific stiffness of the transition member with respect to the proximal and distal shafts and the stent mounted on the balloon. While Hancock et al notes the overall stiffness and the changes in the stiffness along the length of the catheter, it does not specifically teach or disclose the specific stiffness of the transition members with respect to the other catheter shafts and the stent mounted on the balloon. Applicant has amended the independent claims to require that the transition member have a stiffness intermediate that of the proximal and distal shafts, but less than the stent mounted on the balloon or intravascular device on the distal catheter shaft. Support for the amendment is found in the specification at page 7, lines 15-17 and page 7, line 29-page 8, line 1. Accordingly, each and every element required in Applicant's claim is not disclosed in the Hancock et al patent and thus the rejection must be withdrawn.

Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believes all the pending claims are in condition for allowance and should be passed to issue. If the Examiner feels that a telephone conference would in any way expedite the prosecution of the application, please do not hesitate to call the undersigned at telephone (707) 543-0221.

Respectfully submitted,


Catherine C. Maresh
Reg. No. 35,268

Medtronic Vascular, Inc.
3576 Unocal Place
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Tel: (707) 543-0221
Fax: (707) 543-5420